



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ANTIQUE SCALE COLLECTORS

President's Newsletter

Number 51. July, 1991.

CONVENTION REPORT -- '91.

By all accounts, one of the best ever. Chicago was the site, the Forum Hotel the setting, and 103 members and spouses came to enjoy. And enjoy they did! Scales was everyone's favorite subject, and much time was spent talking, listening, seeing, showing, selling, and buying. Interspersed throughout the four-day get-together were a boat trip (a trifle chilly but hardly to notice), festive meals (Italian, Chinese, Mexican), a gala banquet, a trip to the Planetarium, a trip to the Stein collection (how many postal scales can one person own!), and still some free time to enjoy Chicago's myriad attractions.

The turnout was the largest to date, and the four-day, three-night format was the choice of almost everyone who came. As has been our practice in the past, we're enclosing a program as both a souvenir and to give those who weren't with us an idea of all that went on. And while we're at it, our thanks to everyone who contributed in one way or another, and especially to Diana Crawford-Hitchins (our overseas guest), Jan Macho, Steve and Riva-Jill Ginsberg, Bill Doniger, Rod and Madge Webster, George Anna and Phil Wehman, Marty Bronstein, Dick Axelrood, Tim Fisher (V.P., Pelouze Scale Co.), and certainly to Margie Stein, my erstwhile spouse who cheerfully rendered services of every sort starting weeks before the big weekend.

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One of the program highlights was a photography workshop by George Anna and Phil Wehman, at which they provided the audience with a "how to" folder on photographing scales. We prevailed on the Wehmans to reprint the folder in sufficient quantity for all of our members, and the result of their effort is enclosed. If you're taking pictures of your prized possessions, the Wehman article is a must.

We'd also like to report that "first-timers" to our convention came out in impressive numbers, 25 to be exact, or just about 25% of our entire turnout. It was good to see a blend of new faces and "old timers," and we have a hunch that newcomers will continue to be well represented in the future.

And finally, as an aside, our regrets to three couples who had to cancel at the last minute. Betty and Frank Wright were virtually on the plane when Frank took ill (he's now doing fine, we're told), and the same happened to Margaret and Bob Van Frank when Bob took ill (he, too, is faring well these days). The third cancellation came from Ted Stein (my brother), who ran into a last minute business crisis and had to give up what he decidedly had had his heart set on. We're sure to see them all next year.

CONVENTION REPORT -- '92.

That's this coming year, of course, and the site is San Diego, one of the most appealing cities in all the U.S. Several weeks ago, your president (not George Bush!) paid San Diego a visit and spent almost a full day on preliminary plans with Dale Goldman and Deuell Wall, co-chairpersons for our fourteenth conclave. Point one, we were greatly impressed with the enthusiasm both Dale and Deuell showed for their labor-of-love assignment, and point two, we were again reminded just how attractive San Diego is in so many ways. The dates next year, just so you can mark your calendar now, are April 30 to May 3, and from all the good ideas that our chairpersons introduced at our recent meeting, I can tell you that we're in for the kind of festive occasion that California is especially known for.

CONVENTION REPORT -- '93.

Which is as far as our future planning goes. At our Chicago conclave, we put a choice of two east coast cities -- namely, Washington, D.C. and Baltimore -- to those at our general membership meeting, and also, in a special Newsletter, invited members to write us with their preference. The response was nip and tuck between the two cities, and subsequently, after careful review, your directors voted unanimously for Baltimore. This decision in no way should be construed as our finding fault with our nation's capital; on the contrary, our convention in that fair city in 1986 was one of our most enjoyable. However, the factors that weighed in favor of Baltimore were (1) ISASC has never convened there, and our policy is to give precedence to cities new to our venue; (2) Realizing how critically important a convention chairman is to the success of the event, we were pleased to receive a bid for Baltimore from Jerry Katz, accompanied by his offer to serve as convention chairman. Jerry dedicates many, many hours of his time to ISASC, and we know the Baltimore convention couldn't be in better hands; and (3) Baltimore, aside from all else, is a city on the move, with fine hotels, good transportation, a temperate spring climate, and a plethora of places to go and things to do. We know you'll like Baltimore, and following our usual practice, it seems that the dates, tentative for the moment, will be April 29 to May 2. If you're really the plan-ahead type, we can only suggest you block out late April and early May on your 1993 calendar and wait to hear more from us in due time.

GROWING, GROWING, GROWING.

The North American Chapter, at this 1991 mid-year point, can boast of 279 members, and to give you an idea of the rate at which we're growing, cast your eye over the enclosed directory supplement listing new members who've joined during the last three months. And because we encountered a windfall of member-prospects at a special coming together of collectors in California this past June (pray, read on),

it's virtually a certainty that we'll hit 300 before year's end. And that would be a record none of us dared dream about when our Society got underway in 1976. There's no two ways about it. ISASC is on the move, and very much in the right direction.

WE CAME, WE SAW, WE BOUGHT...

and bought and bought. The occasion, to which we all were invited, was by far the world's largest scale auction ever. It all happened this past June, when Jon Hellman, formerly of Denver and some years back an ISASC member, sold outright his collection of 3,000 scales to Tom Barnes of Riverside, California. Barnes, apparently motivated by the idea of auctioning them all in one grand sale, attempted to do just that. All 3,000 were on display in a huge warehouse in Corona, California, where they were previewed on Friday, June 28, and sold and sold and sold on Saturday and Sunday, the 29th and 30th. Bidding was lively and the hammer prices seemed sky-high according to some of our members, of whom some 30 came to the show, mainly from California but also from as far away as New England and elsewhere in the east and midwest. On Sunday, bidding seemed to revert somewhat to more "normal" prices, with everyone agreeing that the auction seemed to be a huge success. However, time ran out late Sunday, with 1,500 or so scales still un-auctioned, and from what we were told, they'll reach the auction block this coming September when Barnes schedules a sequel. As an interesting sidelight, about a dozen collectors came to the auction who had not known of ISASC, and they proceeded to seek us out and ask for information. That's not to mention the publicity the event generated (see the two articles enclosed), which should result in even more inquiries and more new members.

"MARKETPLACE" FOR MEMBERS.

Some years ago, we offered members a service called MARKETPLACE, which was a free listing, distributed each quarter with EQM, enabling members to list scales and ephemera they were looking to buy or sell, or, for that matter, exchange. For some reason, it never took hold, but now, at the suggestion of Jerry Katz, it's being revived. The reasons

are simple: (1) We've probably got twice as many members now as we had back then; (2) Scales are getting harder and harder to find; and (3) It could be an opportunity for the many people who write us with a scale or two to sell to find a buyer. For these reasons, and because we're always ready to consider new sources of revenue, ISASC's directors voted to try MARKETPLACE again, but this time, as Jerry recommended, exact a nominal charge for a listing. The first newly-resurrected copy is enclosed, with complete instructions on how to place a listing. If enough members (or others) see merit in using it as an advertising medium, we'll continue it. If not, we'll at least know we gave it a try.

A NOTE OF SADNESS.

Those many members who knew Tod Carley will be saddened to learn that Tod passed away this past June 11, and for both his ISASC friends and all our members who, even today, are reaping the benefits of his many years of service to our Society, we think it's fitting and proper to use these pages for a brief eulogy.

Tod lived a full 80 years, replete with many memories, and we believe one of his most cherished was the day early last May that he spent, accompanied by his daughter, Ann, with our convention group. He was with us at the Planetarium and on the boat trip, and between those occasions, he and Ann lunched with Diana Crawforth-Hitchins, her husband, Leslie, and me. Tod had particularly asked to be with all of us on that day, and it was quite apparent that the opportunity to consort with his many friends gave him great joy.

Tod not only was a long-time member of ISASC, but for many years served the Society as an officer and director, and during those years contributed to our growth and well-being in so many ways. He managed our library and its huge inventory; did extensive research to track down out-of-print catalogs and books; and meticulously reproduced for our library a number of scale publications.

He packaged and mailed member purchases; established a list of suppliers of Society materials and did business with them for years; devised the idea of a chronological index of EQM articles and developed its format; and, in effect, kept an important hand in our business life.

Tod was a collector par excellence. He had 600 or so scales in his home, to which members were invited during our 1984 convention in Chicago, and which circumstances later obliged him to sell. He was quite an authority on metrology, and aside from the other ways in which he served us, for many years he took on the task (a formidable one) of answering all inquiries that came from near and far, from member and non-member, about scales, weights, the history thereof, and everything else people found reason to ask about.

Along the way, when Tod's ability to continue serving ISASC waned and he found it necessary to curtail his activity, your directors saw fit to elect him an honorary Life Member and Director Emeritus of ISASC. Tod was truly a fine man and a great friend of our Society. He will be missed by all of us who were privileged to know him.

IT'S ELECTION TIME -- AGAIN.

As we see it, one of the many harbingers of advancing age is the way elections keep cropping up. It seems that's true of ISASC, as every three years (which pass all too soon) our by-laws require us to elect a slate of directors. We're trying hard to keep it simple, and for the 1992-94 term of office, we've provided each of you with a notice telling you of the candidates proposed by the nominating committee. Should there be no alternate candidates proposed in the prescribed manner, each member will receive a ballot in October and will be asked to vote for the nominated slate. Assuming that goes as expected, the newly-elected directors will then nominate a slate of officers for the same three-year term, and ISASC will proceed merrily on its way.

DIANA CRAWFORTH-HITCHINS WRITES...

to tell us that our new computer and printer have been purchased (thank you all for your \$20), and as soon as she gets the hang of all that high-tech stuff, we can expect to see changes (all for the better) in the format and look of EQM. Also -- again as a result of our high tech capabilities -- we're hoping that our EQM Index, which Diana authored in 1983, will be updated by her through 1991 and will continue to serve our needs as the rich research resource (now there's a tongue-twister) it's been to so many of us.

And while on the subject of EQM, Diana points out that she's very much aware of how eager North American members are for articles on U.S. scales, and how she'd very much like to oblige. However, she adds, she can only include such material in EQM when it's forthcoming from members, and to that end, she's asked that we reproduce the following list, just to show everyone how diverse our hobby is and how many different categories there are, about any one of which she'd welcome material (or, even better, an article): British scales for Colonial India (tola weights), British coin scales with Real (Spanish) weights, grain scales, tea scales, paper scales, diamond scales, photographic scales, toy and model scales, brass-faced scales, egg scales, advertising scales, one-of-a-kind scales, famed manufacturers' scales (and those are just for starters). So let's all take a second look at our scales and see if we can't find the makings of an article. If something's of special interest to you, it's likely to be of interest to others.

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE...

** "Red" Meade sent us a copy of a 15-page interview/article that recently appeared in the Spring, 1991, issue of The Coin Slot, and if you're looking for a highly-entertaining, first-person tale of the coin-operated scale industry, this is it. It's liberally laced with a good number of Red's colorful anecdotes, which only serve to make the story that much more engrossing. Red's willing

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to send a photocopy of the article to anyone who writes or calls him and requests it, so your next move should be to look him up in your member directory and take him up on his offer.

- ** In mid-May, an unusual letter crossed our desk from Michal Zimmer, 9419 E. 1700 So., Huntsville, UT 84317. Jerry Katz ("Ask Jerry") gave him some help, but we're reproducing the letter here in the hope that other members also might be able to help Mr. Zimmer in his quite out-of-the-ordinary quest:

Dear Mr. Stein:

I read of the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors in a wire story from my local newspaper, and was hoping you might be able to shed some light on a 49lb hand-forged steelyard scale I recently purchased. Although I was unable to trace the history of this particular scale, I've done some research on steelyards in general, and would like to write an article for a historical journal on scales used on the frontiers of the 18th and 19th centuries.

My interest in this comes from research on the American buffalo from a historical perspective. Steelyards were common at trading posts and frontier communities of that period. I'd like to know what other types of scales were used on the various frontiers, and especially those used by the fur companies of the 1820s and 1830s, including the scales taken to rendezvous.

I wonder if you could recommend some good books, magazine articles, or papers on this subject that I could get through an interlibrary loan. Anything that includes primary source information -- reprinted journals, ledgers, etc. -- would be particularly helpful.

Thanks, and I'll look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Michael Zimmer

- ** Member Irving Olson and spouse, Ruth, were off to Europe this past spring and sent us a nice note telling us how sorry they were to miss our convention. We thank them for the sentiment, and for the \$100 "good of the cause" check that came with it. We hope to see you both in San Diego.
- ** Fritz Schmerl, one of our perennially youthful senior members, writes to tell us, sadly, of the loss of his wife, Gretl. However, Fritz's varied professional activities still keep him busy, and he's presently working on an expanded paperback edition of his book, The Challenge of Age, to be published in October. Now there's a man who keeps looking for hills to climb.
- ** Lew Weiss, one of our staunchest contributors, writes to tell us that if you're looking for old scales to buy, write (or call) T.J. Windesch, Purchasing Manager, Vertex Industries, Inc., 23 Carol St., Clifton, NJ 07014. Vertex was formerly Torsion Balance Co., and if Lew says they have scales to sell, he most likely knows whereof he speaks.
- ** Although the auction of 3,000 scales in California seemed to be a record-setter, this past April 27-28 witnessed a most impressive auction in Chartres, France, comprising 2,000 weights and 180 balances, with the weights running the antiquities gamut from Roman to Egyptian to Byzantine to Oriental to African to Arabian, and the balances encompassing the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries. The collection's owner, a "Monsieur de C," seemed to prefer anonymity, but the breadth of the collection spoke for itself. The auctioneer ("Expert") was Monsieur Jean Rondillon, and if you'd like a copy of the catalog, you might write to him at 206, Boulevard Saint Germain, 75007 Paris, France.
- ** Member Ruth Willard sent us a newsy letter about her peripatetic activities in the world of metrology, and in it she commended our efforts to attract first-timers to our convention. Although our

\$1,300 cash drawing was a decided hit this past May (especially with the four members who shared the largess), we've concluded that that particular incentive is a little too rich for our blood. So we're following Ruth's suggestion and asking our members if anyone out there has any good, low-cost ideas for building convention attendance. This year's turnout was our highest ever, but when we look back on the good times had by all who came, we can't help but feel we should be doing something more to get everyone to come. Let's hear from you if you know something we should know.

** George Mallis, another ISASC stalwart, wrote us last March to tell us he'd just delivered to the printer the final manuscript for The Standard Designation for Coin Weights for the Silver Coinage of England, Scotland, Ireland and Great Britain, Vol. II. It's presumably long off the press by now and available, in a limited edition, to interested members. George estimated its cost to be about \$26, including postage, but prefers to have prospective buyers deal with him direct. Never one to be idle, George is about to collaborate with member Eric Newman on a book titled, Coin Scales and Counterfeit Coin Detecting Mechanisms of the United States, and after that, he'll be collaborating with Roy Van Allen on a revision of The Comprehensive Catalogue and Encyclopedia of U.S. Morgan and Peace Silver Dollars. And after that, he plans to move on to gold and silver coinage of Germany, France, Spain and Portugal. Where George finds the time, nobody knows, but he surely deserves a laurel as one of the most prolific authors to come down the metrological pike in a long time.

NOW, PUTTING PEN ASIDE,

and realizing that this missive is undoubtedly the longest newsletter ever written, we bid you goodbye and wish you well until fortune smiles on you next October when, again, it will be Newsletter Time.

Fraternally,

